



Tribute to Rocky Harris

UNECE-OECD SEEA seminar, 13 March 2023

Rocky Harris was a wonderful man and for more than 20 years played a very important part of international environmental accounting community, both intellectually and, along with his wife Lindis, socially. Many of you probably knew him personally. Sadly Rocky passed away in January this year, at home with his loving family following a period of illness.

Rocky spent 48 years in the United Kingdom's Government Statistical Service, retiring in April 2022. He started work on environmental accounting in 1998, attending his first London Group Meeting in Canberra 1999. Rocky attended most, if not all London Group Meetings until 2021 along with many other expert group meetings. Rocky had even read many of the papers for the London Group Meeting in Germany last year.

Rocky played a key role in the development, implementation and use of the SEEA. He was prominent in the writing of 2003 version of the SEEA and later the SEEA Central Framework and Ecosystem Accounting, taking leading roles, chairing technical working groups and drafting text.

Rocky was always well prepared for technical discussions, and his theoretical knowledge and practical experience of environmental accounting was a great asset providing a steady flow of services to the international accounting community. Part of this was the development of SEEA and another part was implementing accounting in different parts of the world – The Philippines, Myanmar, Costa Rica and more as well as to the World Bank's WAVES programme. His position in the United Kingdom's

Government meant that he had an excellent connection to the policy side of accounting.

Rocky was not only very knowledgeable and ready to help. He was also very social, good humoured and excellent at setting up tours in the various parts of the world where the meetings were held. He often attended meetings with his wife Lindis, who became well known at the London Group and friend to many of us.

Rocky was an active birdwatcher, and when he was abroad for a meeting or on a mission he always tried to combine it with organizing a small field trip to watch some special birds, on which he also invited many of his colleagues. I also had the pleasure to accompany him on a few of these trips. I remember a WB meeting in the neighborhood of Washington DC, when we made an early morning walk along the river. Rocky pointed out several special birds that were not living in Europe but only in the US. Suddenly, a very large bird came flying across the river towards us. I had to point it out to Rocky, who was studying a very small bird through his binoculars and almost missed it. It was the famous bald American eagle. This was a very exciting moment, also for Rocky, who had never seen one before.

It did not matter where we were in the world. Rocky had always done the homework, knowing where to find the birds. With Rocky it was always fun, seeing the sights, learning about birds and debating the finer points of accounting.

Rocky was a very special person, a scholar, a great colleague and a very good friend to many of us. He will be fondly remembered and dearly missed.